



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

- PEASE, E. R. *Profit-sharing and co-partnership: a fraud and a failure?* Fabian tract, 170. (London: Fabian Society. 1913. Pp. 16. 1d.)
- SCHLOESSER, H. H. *The nationalization of mines and minerals bill.* Fabian tract, No. 171. (London: Fabian Society. 1913. Pp. 15. 1d.)
- ROBERTS, I. *Looking forward; a study in social justice looking to coöperation as offering the solution of difficulties.* (Philadelphia: Roberts & Co. 1913. Pp. 5, 315. \$1.)
- ROBINSON, M. F. *The spirit of association: being some account of the guilds, friendly societies, coöperative movement, and trade unions of Great Britain.* (London: Murray. 1913. Pp. 403. 6s.)
- WILBRANDT, R. *Die Bedeutung der Konsumgenossenschaften.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 1913. Pp. 28. 0.50 m.)
- ZETKIN, K. *Karl Marx und sein Lebenswerk! Vortrag. Mit einem Anhang: Literatur über Marx und von Marx.* (Elberfeld: Freie Presse. 1913. Pp. 47. 0.25 m.)

Statistics and Its Methods

La Théorie de l'Homme Moyen. Essai sur Quetelet et la Statistique Morale. By MAURICE HALBWACHS. (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan. 1913. Pp. 180. 2.50 fr.)

In this very interesting little volume on a much debated statistical subject there are five chapters, of which the first and the fourth are respectively descriptive of Quetelet's conception of the average man physically and morally viewed. The second and third chapters are critical of the physical concept and the fifth of the moral. A conclusion gives a resumé of the principal views of the author. The presentation of Quetelet's views is systematic and faithful; but as indicated below the interpretation is not always adequate. In the critical chapters, are taken up in turn many of those problems regarding the average man which have been objects of dispute for half a century—the reality of the average man, the average as a type of the species, as the perfect in beauty and goodness, its relation to birth and death statistics, the equality of the sexes, and the significance of the so-called "tendency" to commit crime. One is struck with the complete absence of references to the problem of free will which one must struggle to avoid in writing about Quetelet and to which another recent writer in this field has devoted considerable attention.¹

¹ *Quetelet: Statisticien et Sociologue*, by Joseph Lottin (Félix Alcan, 1912). Reviewed by present writer, in *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. xxvii, pp. 718-723.

Two views characterize the author's criticisms throughout. In the first place he thinks the conception of the average man is not in harmony with that theorem of probabilities which requires that the elements involved shall be independent of each other. This point is repeatedly insisted upon (pp. 53, 97-8, ch. 5, conclusion, *passim*). That is, the average man does not result from the statistical massing of many unrelated and wholly disparate men, but rather is the result of measurements on many men related by multitudes of physical and social bonds, and therefore mutually dependent. As a consequence, the author holds, the theory of probabilities cannot apply. Here also hinges the second characteristic of the author's views—namely, that biological and social conditions are competent to explain statistical results and therefore the probabilities theory need not be intruded.

To make the author's meaning clear let us take the distribution of heights. He holds that in order for the theory of probabilities to apply one must establish that the persons measured "are independent one of another and of all those who have preceded them," (p. 163). But now since the young men aged twenty of a nation are related and mutually dependent, "the conditions in which the theory of probabilities might apply are not realized" (p. 164).

Here is truth mingled with error. Undoubtedly the individuals of a nation are related and mutually dependent, but it is equally undoubted that the theory of probabilities does apply. This is merely a statement of fact. The work of Quetelet on this point has been so fully supplemented by that of Galton, Pearson, and the anthropologists that mere opinion to the contrary counts for naught. When our author goes to the extent of dispensing with the law of large numbers on the purely theoretical ground that the group studied must be composed of wholly unrelated individuals he likewise runs counter to well-established facts and usage. He thus states the opposite of the fact when he says (p. 174) that society and moral actions constitute "the realm in which the calculus of probabilities is least applicable." And he reveals a lack of full comprehension of statistical method when he adds that Quetelet's theory "from the standpoint of scientific research, presents this great inconvenience, either of condemning us to remain ignorant of causes, or, if we wish to attain them, of engaging in calculations of an infinite complexity" (p. 174-5). Halbwach's theory is contrary not only to fact but to theory as well. Why should not one with equal cogency argue that the

theory of probabilities will not apply to the results of tossing a dozen pennies because the pennies are related, being made from the same substance, molded in the same dies, and thrown from the same hand? The infinite variations in the numerous conditions of heredity and environment make necessary the statistical method developed by Quetelet as a means of finding order in chaos.

The second characteristic of the author's criticisms does not do justice to Quetelet. He repeatedly implies that the latter considered the theory of probabilities as constituting in itself an adequate scientific explanation of the phenomena studied. (See pp. 61 to 69, 89 to 99, 134 to end of ch. 5, and 161 *et seq.*) Indeed, the author seems to think that Quetelet's theory was that statistical regularities are to be explained solely as the chance results of the actions of many detached and unrelated individuals. For this crude explanation the author would substitute those biological and social conditions essential to the appearance of the phenomena. Thus the regular distribution of heights is explained not by the probabilities theory but by "organic constitution, physical milieu, and their mutual adaptations" (p. 68); the equality of the sexes is not to be explained by the laws of chance but by Düsing's theory of auto-regulation "modified by sociological considerations" (pp. 90 *et seq.*); so also other facts (pp. 97-8).

Now all this is to leave out of account Quetelet's whole conception of the "social system" and the consequent emphasis he laid on social factors. Indeed, Halbwachs himself inconsistently emphasizes this (pp. 104 and 133). The more consistent interpretation of Quetelet is that he held the mathematical presentation not in itself an explanation but rather a means whereby the phenomena could be connected with social and physical conditions. The author, following Durkheim, says that in Quetelet's view the "real cause" of the normal is its greater probability and not the relations that may be discovered between the character studied and its conditions of existence. Now it is true that Quetelet held the most frequent result to be the normal, but he sought to connect it and the variations from it with concrete circumstances.

Nevertheless, this volume should be read by all interested in its problems. While it has neither the historical nor philosophical interest of Lottin's work it is more pointed and stimulated.

F. H. HANKINS.

Clark University.